

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

----- 019328

O R 190932Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5546

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 1227

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, UN

SUBJECT: KOREAN QUESTION AT THE UN: CONSULTATIONS WITH ROK

REF: (A) STATE 36713, (B) STATE 037573, (C) USUN 0218

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING AMBASSADOR'S PRESENTATION OF U.S. APPROACH TO THIS YEAR'S UNGA DEBATE ON KOREA CONTAINED REF A, FONMIN PARK PROPOSED POSSIBILITY OF NOT SUBMITTING CONVENTIONAL WESTERN RESOLUTION AND DELAYING DECISION ON THIS ALTERNATIVE VERSUS GIVING OUR SUPPORT TO A NEUTRAL NATIONS RESOLUTION UNTIL AFTER NORTH KOREAN RESOLUTION INSCRIBED. AFTER HEARING AMBASSADOR'S ARGUMENTS FONMIN AGREED U.S. AND ROK SHOULD ADOPT POSITIVE JOINT POSITION AT FORTHCOMING CORE GROUP MEETING LEAVING OPTIONS OPEN, BUT HELD TO POINT WE SHOULD DEALY DECISION ON FRIENDLY RESOLUTION UNTIL AFTER HOSTILE RESOLUTION INSCRIBED. PARK WAS DUBIOUS ABOUT PROPOSAL FOR NORTH-SOUTH FONMIN MEETING, BUT SAID HE WOULD CONSIDER IT. END SUMMARY.

1. AMBASSADOR OPENED LENGTHY INITIAL SESSION ON KOREAN UN QUESTION WITH ROK FONMIN PAK TONG-CHIN ON FEBRUARY 19 WITH REVIEW OF ALL POINTS IN DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTION (REF A). AMBASSADOR ALSO COVERED KEY POINTS WE PLAN TO MAKE WITH NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE COORDINATING GROUP COUNTRIES CONTAINED REF B. DRAWING ON USUN VOTING ANALYSIS CONTAINED REF C, AMBASSADOR SAID WE COULD NOT OF COURSE PREDICT OUTCOME THIS YEAR'S VOTING, BUT TOOK CAUTIOUSLY UPBEAT LINE ON

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POSSIBILITIES OF PASSING FRIENDLY RESOLUTION AT 31ST UNGA.

AMBASSADOR UNDERLINED IN OPENING PRESENTATION, AS WELL AS SUBSEQUENTLY, NECESSITY IN OUR VIEW OF US AND ROK JOINTLY MAINTAINING POSITIVE STANCE AT THIS STAGE AND NOT ADOPTING POSITIONS WHICH WOULD LEAVE FIELD TO NORTH KOREANS OR PRECLUDE TACTICAL OPTIONS, PARTICULARLY IN RESPONSE TO NEGATIVE, PESSIMISTIC VIEWS FIRST EXPRESSED BY FONMIN.

2. FONMIN EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR DEPARTMENT'S CAREFUL ANALYSIS AND PREPARATION OF U.S. POSITION. HE AGREED ON BASIC POINTS THAT:

(A) IT NOT IN US/ROK MUTUAL INTEREST TO HAVE DEBATE THIS YEAR;

(B) IT PROBABLE DEBATE WILL NONETHELSSS BE FORCED BY NORTH KOREA;

(C) HOSTILE RESOLUTION WILL ALMOST INEVITABLY PASS;

(D) EARLY CONSULTATION WITH CORE GROUP DESIRABLE AND ROKS PREPARED TO CALL SUCH MEETING;

(E) IT PREMATURE TO AGREE ON FINAL TACTICS AT THIS POINT.

3. PARK THEN, HOWEVER, OUTLINED RATHER PESSIMISTIC ROK ASSESSMENT OF CHANCES FOR FRIENDLY RESOLUTION, NOTING THERE WAS LITTLE HOPE OF CHIPPING AWAY AT LAST YEAR'S VOTES IN FAVOR OF COMMUNIST RESOLUTION, THAT OUTLOOK FOR SUPPORT FROM NEW COUNTRIES IN UN NOT FAVORABLE, AND THAT TREND IN AFRICA AND ELSEWHERE AMONG NON-ALIGNED INDICATED STRONG POSSIBILITY LOSING SOME SUPPORTING VOTES FROM LAST YEAR. IN VIEW CONSEQUENT GOOD POSSIBILITY THAT FRIENDLY RESOLUTION WOULD NOT BE CARRIED, PARK SAID (CLEARLY UNDER PRESIDENTIAL INSTRUCTIONS) ROK VIEW WAS THAT THIS YEAR WE SHOULD NOT TAKE INITIATIVE IN SUBMITTING DRAFT RESOLUTION; RATHER WE SHOULD WAIT AND SEE IF COMMUNISTS SUBMIT RESOLUTION, THEN DECIDE HOW BEST TO COUNTER IT. IF IT WAS AGREED AT THAT TIME THAT CONVENTIONAL WESTERN DRAFT RESOLUTION HAD NO CHANCE OF PASSING WITH COMFORTABLE MARGIN, PARK PROPOSED WE MIGHT THEN INDUCE NEUTRAL COUNTRIES SUCH AS ASEANS AND SCANDINAVIANS TO SUBMIT THEIR OWN RESOLUTION WHICH WOULD HAVE BETTER CHANCE OF SUCCESS.

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ASSUMING SUCH A RESOLUTION PROVED ACCEPTABLE TO US, WE COULD THEN MARSHALL SUPPORT FOR IT. FURTHERMORE, IT MIGHT BE PREFERABLE NOT TO SUBMIT FRIENDLY RESOLUTION IF DEFEAT SEEMED LIKELY. FONMIN PROPOSED TO PUT FORWARD THIS APPROACH DURING FORTHCOMING CORE GROUP MEETING.

4. AS REGARDS U.S. PROPOSAL THAT ROKS PUBLICLY CALL FOR SOUTH/NORTH FONMIN TALKS (REF A), PARK INDICATED UNAWARENESS

FORMER FONMIN KIM DONG-JO'S SUGGESTION TO THIS EFFECT, THEN EXPRESSED SOME DOUBT ABOUT IT. HE POINTED OUT THAT MOST COUNTRIES WOULD SEE THIS AS NON-STARTER AND MIGHT QUESTION ROK MOTIVES IN FLOATING IDEA. FONMIN DID AGREE, HOWEVER, TO STUDY PROPOSAL CAREFULLY. IN MEANTIME HE AGREED THAT REITERATION OF SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL AT OPENING LAST UNGA TO HAVE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES DIRECTLY CONCERNED WOULD BE DESIRABLE. HE SUGGESTED THAT PRESIDENT PARK HIMSELF RE-OFFER THIS PROPOSAL PUBLICLY AND THAT U.S. SUBSEQUENTLY ENDORSE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT. IN THIS CONNECTION PARK SUGGESTED PRESIDENT INCLUDE IN HIS PUBLIC STATEMENT POINT THAT FURTHER DEBATE OF KOREAN ISSUE IN UN WOULD SERVE NO POSITIVE PURPOSE SINCE IT WOULD ONLY SERVE TO EXACERBATE TENSIONS.

5. IN RESPONSE TO PARK, AMBASSADOR, WHILE ARGUING STRONGLY FOR MAINTENANCE STRONG, POSITIVE POSTURE, MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
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(A) WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT IT NOT IN OUR INTEREST TO HAVE DEBATE THIS YEAR, IT WOULD NOT BE IN U.S. OR ROK INTEREST TO LEAVE FIELD OPEN ONLY TO NORTH KOREA. FURTHERMORE, IT WAS ALSO IMPORTANT TO INCLUDE IN ANY STATEMENT URGING AGAINST CONTINUATION OF UNPRODUCTIVE UN DEBATE SECOND KEY POINT THAT, IF NORTH KOREA PERSISTS IN FORCING DEBATE WE PREPARED TO DEFEND OURSELVES WITH ALL MEANS POSSIBLE; NOT TO MAKE LATTER POINT AT SAME TIME AS FORMER WOULD LOSE US VITAL CORE GROUP AND OTHER SUPPORT AND LEAD TO DEFEAT. AMBASSADOR SAID IT

WOULD BE NECESSARY TO CONSULT WITH WASHINGTON ON PRESIDENT PARK'S STATEMENT;

(B) IT WOULD BE PREMATURE AND NOT WISE AT THIS STAGE TO PRECLUDE OTHER OPTIONS AND ADOPT SPECIFIC STRATEGY TO WAIT FOR COMMUNIST INITIATIVE AND THEN DECIDE ON WHETHER TO SUBMIT CONVENTIONAL WESTERN RESOLUTION, NOT SUBMIT ANDY RESOLUTION, OR PUT WEIGHT BEHIND A NEUTRAL NATION RESOLUTION;

(C) IF NORTH CAME UP WITH RESOLUTION AND WE DID NOT, IT HIGHLY UNLIKELY NEUTRAL NATIONS WOULD STICK NECKS OUT ON THEIR OWN; THEY WOULD BE FAR MORE LIKELY TO RESPOND IN HELPFUL MANNER IN SITUATION WHERE CONFLICTING RESOLUTIONS AND IMPASSE EXISTED;

(D) SUBJECT TO WASHINGTON VIEWS, WE MIGHT FIND
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IT TO OUR ADVANTAGE AS IN PAST TO SUBMIT FRIENDLY RESOLUTION EARLY SO AS TO MAINTAIN PRIORITY AND THIS WOULD REQUIRE EARLY DECISION ON NORTH KOREAN INTENTIONS;

(E) ROK AND U.S. SHOULD ADOPT JOINT POSITIVE STANCE AT CORE GROUP MEETING AND IN ANY PUBLIC STATEMENTS MADE, ANALYZE ASSESSMENT OF CHANCES WITH CORE GROUP MEMBERS, AND DISCUSS ALL POSSIBLE TACTICAL OPTIONS IN LIGHT ANALYSIS BEFORE FINALLY DECIDING ON OUR APPROACH.

6. IN COURSE CONSIDERABLE FOLLOW-UP EXCHANGE FONMIN WHILE REMAINING MORE PESSIMISTIC ABOUT FRIENDLY CHANCES AND CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE DEFEAT, APPEARED TO MOVE TOWARD ACCEPTANCE POINTS IN PARA 7 AND SPECIFICALLY ACKNOWLEDGED IT UNLIKELY NEUTRAL NATIONS WOULD COME FORTH WITH RESOLUTION IN ABSENCE CONVENTIONAL WESTERN RESOLUTION. ONE DIFFERENCE REMAINING AT CONCLUSION CONVERSATION HOWEVER, WAS TIMING OF DECISION TO FIGHT NORTH KOREANS. FONMIN PARK HELD TO POSITION THAT DECISION TO SUBMIT CONVENTIONAL WESTERN RESOLUTIONS SHOULD BE HELD OFF UNTIL AFTER NORTH KOREA DECIDES TO INSCRIBE KOREAN ITEM AND INTRODUCE RESOLUTION. AMBASSADOR, NOTING PAST ADVANTAGES IN WINNING PRIORITY FOR OUR RESOLUTION, SUGGESTED IT MIGHT BE BETTER TO MAKE THIS DECISION "WHEN IT APPEARS LIKELY" NORTH KOREA WILL SUBMIT RESOLUTION OF ITS OWN.

7. AT CONCLUSION MEETING IT WAS AGREED THAT AT FOLLOW-UP MEETING FONMIN WOULD LET US KNOW ROKG DECISION REGARDING PROPOSAL FOR NORTH/SOUTH FOREIGN MINISTERS TALKS AND ON TIMING AND PARTICIPATION OF CORE GROUP

MEETING WHICH ROKS WILL CONVENE. THE AMBASSADOR UNDERTOOK TO SEEK WASHINGTON VIEWS ON DESIRABILITY SEEKING PRIORITY FOR OUR RESOLUTION THIS YEAR, RELATED QUESTION RE TIMING OF SUBMISSION OF FRIENDLY RESOLUTION RAISED IN PARA 6, AND CONTENT OF POSSIBLE STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT PARK DISCUSSED PARA 4 AND 5.A.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: A) WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS ON THE THREE ABOVE QUESTIONS ASAP FOR NEXT MEETING WITH PARK. B) SUBSEQUENT PREPARATION ABOVE
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MESSAGE, MOFA AMERICAN BUREAU DIRECTOR PARK SONG YOM TELEPHONED THAT IF DEPARTMENT AGREED ROK SIDE PROPOSED TO CONVENE CORE GROUP MEETING MARCH 8-9 IN NEW YORK. WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT REACTION PROPOSED DATES AS WELL.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: UNGA RESOLUTIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SEOUL01227
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760062-0100
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760234/aaaabdom.tel
Line Count: 245
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 STATE 36713, 76 STATE 37573
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <07 SEP 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KOREAN QUESTION AT THE UN: CONSULTATIONS WITH ROK
TAGS: PFOR, KS, US, UNSC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006